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Housekeepers' Chat

Wednesday, April 1, 1931

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Subject: "Training the Appetite." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Good Food Habits for Children."

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Resolutions are in order first thing today. I know it is a little late for me to be doing a job that correctly belongs to New Years, but better late than not at all. So here's my new resolution: From now on to give all recipes very slowly. From now on if you want to put down every word of the directions for making any of the dishes you shall have the chance. Some of my friends have suggested that those recipes have been slipping off my tongue too fast for them to write. I apologize. You see, when I start describing the dishes that the Recipe Lady prepares, my appetite is likely to run away with me. Before I know it, I'm rushing along, giving directions likety-split, so that only a high-powered pencil can follow.

Well, I'm reforming today. I'm going to talk distinctly and with deliberation. I'm going to pause at every stop sign so you won't miss a word. You can do your part by using abbreviations wherever possible -- C for cup, TS for teaspoon and TB for tablespoon. As for the "ands" and "buts" and other unimportant words, why bother to write them at all in your notes?

Our menu today is again planned with thought for the younger member of the family. I have two recipes to give you. If I begin cutting capers and running circles while I read those recipes, you can complain in earnest. However, I promise to try very hard not to get too enthusiastic when I talk about savory meat on crisp toast and special caramel custard. It will be difficult, though, because those two dishes have been favorites of mine since I was knee-high to a grasshopper.

The menu begins, as you have already guessed, with Savory meat on toast. Next, Creamed new cabbage; Buttered onions; and for dessert, Baked caramel custard. A meal, you see, to suit sons and daughters of the runabout age as well as business-men fathers. Speaking of the youngsters in the family reminds me that a friend of mine from South Carolina, who has been reading much of the recent literature on child guidance, says she like the quaint old Southern expression "knee children" better than the modern phrase "pre-school children." That's a new term to me, but I like it, too.

Pencils ready? The recipe for savory meat on toast has eight ingredients:

1 pound of chopped lamb or beef
4 cups of chopped celery stalks and leaves
1 small onion chopped
2 cups of canned tomatoes
1 teaspoon of salt
2 tablespoons of butter or other fat
2 tablespoons of flour
Toast
I'll say those over again. (Repeat).

(Announcer: Please read the following slowly.)

Brown the chopped meat in its own fat in a skillet. Add the celery, the onions, the tomatoes and the salt. Cover the skillet and cook for 15 minutes -- or until the meat is tender.

Am I going slowly enough? All right.

Now blend the butter and flour and add them to the meat mixture. Stir until it has thickened. Serve on slices of thin crisp toast. Delicious, inexpensive, and easy to prepare.

Then there is new green cabbage, which you will cook just long enough to make it tender and not a minute longer. Use an open kettle and drop the cabbage in boiling salted water. Onions the same.

Now we'll come to our caramel custard. Oh my! Oh, my! How Horace and Ann do enjoy their custard. Eight ingredients for this recipe:

1 cup of sugar
1 cup of water
1 quart of milk
1/4 teaspoon of salt
2 tablespoons of sugar
1/2 teaspoon of vanilla
5 eggs

Once more. (Repeat)

(Announcer: Please read the following slowly.)

Put the sugar in a skillet over low heat and stir it until it turns a rich, brown color--caramel color. Add the water and go on stirring until a rich caramel sirup has formed. Then take it off the fire. Now, heat the milk slightly, add the salt and the two tablespoons of sugar. Then add 1/2 cup of the caramel sirup and the vanilla. Beat the eggs slightly, and add the milk and caramel mixture to them. Butter your custard cups. In each one put about a teaspoon of the caramel sirup. Fill with the custard mixture. Put a small piece of butter on top.

Of course, you know that custards are always set to bake in a pan of hot water in a moderate oven (350 degrees F.). Bake them for 45 minutes, or until set.

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How do you know when they are done? Test them by inserting the point of a knife in the center of the custard. If it comes out clean, the custard is done and should be removed at once from the hot water.

When it is cool, turn out on individual plates. The caramel sirup in the bottom of the cups will run down over the custard like a sauce.

"It's all very well to prepare a nice meal like this for the family, but what if the children won't eat it?" asks a mother of my acquaintance. "Suppose Alice pushes away her cabbage and Jack protests against onions."

In these fortunate days, parents need no longer remain in the dark about such problems. There are successful ways to teach children to eat the food set before them -- to eat it and enjoy it. Experts in child guidance have come to the rescue of fathers and mothers in this matter of children's food prejudices and whims.

Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter of the Bureau of Home Economics, who has made a special study of this problem, says that appetites can be trained by teaching good food habits early. Yes, she firmly believes that appetite is largely a matter of habit, and that all children should be guided from the first to develop the desire to eat the right foods. Forming a good habit is a step in character building. Developing the habit of eating the right foods is the foundation of good nutrition. So, you see, character building and body building in this way go hand in hand.

The normal, rapidly growing child has a good appetite. He comes to the table eager for his meal, and he eats with zest the food set before him. He has developed good food habits under guidance. When children dawdle over their food, or when they refuse it, their habits of eating need to be retrained. If you have an Alice or a Jack in your home and want some suggestions about training or retraining their attitudes toward food I suggest that you send for Mrs. Carpenter's little leaflet called "Good Food Habits for Children." It is full of practical, common sense methods. Several of my friends have assured me that they worked like magic with their children. Write for the leaflet and we'll be glad to mail it to you.

Tomorrow: "Longer Lives for Rugs and Carpets." Some hints about repairing them and taking out spots. And for Friday, "Dinner on Easter."

